

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 169227

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, ET, US

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTS ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REFERENCES: (A) ADDIS ABABA 8463; (B) JIDDA 4415

1. WITH REGARD TO PARA 6 REF A WE DO NOT THINK IT ADVISABLE FOR US TO SUGGEST SPECIFIC COUNTRIES TO WHOM IEG COULD GO TO OBTAIN US SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT EITHER ALREADY IN PLACE OR IN THE PIPELINE. WHILE A CERTAIN COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS MADE IT LOGICAL FOR IEG TO APPROACH SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN WE CANNOT SEE ANY OTHER COUNTRIES SIMILARLY INDICATED. ANY
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INITIATIVES BASED ON US SUGGESTION WOULD COMPLICATE THE

ISSUE FOR THE THIRD COUNTRY AND COULD ALSO CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR US, AS IT MIGHT MAKE USG APPEAR TO BE INITIATING EFFORTS AND ENCOURAGING THIRD PARTIES TO DIVERT SPECIFIC US-ORIGIN MILITARY ITEMS TO ETHIOPIA.

2. SIMILARLY WE WOULD NOT WANT TO BECOME INVOLVED DIRECTLY IN ANY BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT BETWEEN IEG AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS IT CHOOSES TO APPROACH ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE. SUCH DIRECT US INVOLVEMENT COULD LEAD TO CHARGE THAT WE ARE ORCHESTRATING, IF NOT INTERFERING, IN FOREIGN RELATIONS OF OTHER NATIONS AND COULD WELL BE MISINTERPRETED AT HOME AND ABROAD, PARTICULARLY BY CONGRESS WHICH IS PRESENTLY REVIEWING THE ADMINISTRATION'S FY 1975 SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS. AND EVEN IF WE SUCCEEDED IN STAYING OUT OF DISCUSSIONS WE WOULD EVENTUALLY BE FORCIBLY BROUGHT

INTO THE ACT, DESPITE OUR WISHES OR THOSE OF CONTRACTING PARTIES, BY THE NECESSITY FOR THE USG TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF US MADE WEAPONS. PROBLEM WOULD THEN BE HOW TO RESPOND IN MANNER AVOIDING CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM REFERRED TO ABOVE WHILE ATTEMPTING TO SHAPE SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO IEG AND THIRD PARTIES.

3. FURTHERMORE THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH AN APPROACH BY THE IEG COULD LEAD TO ACQUISITION OF NON-US ARMS, BRINGING ON ATTENDANT PROBLEMS OF FOREIGN TECHNICIANS/ADVISORS, LOGISTICS (METRIC VS ENGLISH MEASUREMENTS), LANGUAGE PROBLEMS, ETC, AND GREATLY COMPLICATING THE MODERNIZATION EFFECT BEING UNDERTAKEN BY MAAG.

4. CONCERNING YOUR REPLY TO PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTION WE THINK IT WOULD PROBABLY BE BETTER TO AVOID A RESPONSE IF POSSIBLE. ADDITIONAL DOLS 28 MILLION CASH SALES AUTHORIZATION REQUEST HAS JUST BEEN APPROVED AND WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO AMBASSADOR KIFLE BY UNDERSECRETARY SISCO AT 1200, MONDAY, AUGUST 5, AND WE FEEL THAT THERE MAY THEREFORE BE LESS ETHIOPIAN INTEREST IN SEEKING ARMS IN THIRD COUNTRIES. IF YOU FEEL A REPLY IS REQUIRED, NEVERTHELESS, WE SUGGEST YOU INFORM HIM THAT COUNTRIES SUPPLIED WITH US-MADE WEAPONS INCLUDE NATO, ANZUS, AND SEATO
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COUNTRIES AND OTHERS SUCH AS JAPAN AND KOREA WITH WHOM THE US HAS SPECIAL MILITARY TIES. IT COULD ALSO BE POINTED OUT TO PM THAT DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE ARMAMENTS OF ALL THESE COUNTRIES IS TO BE FOUND IN SUCH EXCELLENT AND COMPLETE STUDIES AS THE "JANE'S" BOOKS AND THE INSTITUTE OF OF STRATEGIC STUDIES PUBLICATIONS WHICH, WE ARE SURE, ARE AVAILABLE TO THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY.

5. AT SUCH TIME AS YOU RESPOND TO PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTION OR ON ANOTHER APPROPRIATE OCCASION YOU MAY WANT TO INQUIRE ABOUT STATUS OF PROJECTED IEG APPROACH TO SAUDI ARABIA FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE, AND INFORM IEG OF SAUDI COMMENT REPORTED BY REF B. FYI: AMBASSADOR KIFLE TOLD US JULY 12 THAT APPROACH TO SAUDI ARABIA WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE PURSUED AS IEG THOUGHT SAUDIS WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO ANTAGONIZE SOMALIA, A FELLOW MEMBER OF ARAB LEAGUE, BY SUPPLYING ARMS TO ITS POTENTIAL ENEMY THE IEG. END FYI KISSINGER

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